

MAKING TIME FOR EXERCISE IS EASY

By now you know that exercise is good for you, and that you should do something on a regular basis. What's the best time for you to exercise? Any time. Honestly.

For example, when you're sitting and watching TV, stretch your muscles. Never stretch so hard it hurts. Instead, stretch to the point of mild tension and hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.

A healthy exercise program includes three kinds of exercise: aerobic activity, muscular conditioning and flexibility exercise. You can start your exercise program without investing in any elaborate equipment. For example, you can do simple body-weight exercises at home or at your desk at work, including sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups.

For basic strength-training exercises, expensive weight-lifting equipment isn't required. Instead, head for the kitchen and pick up the soup cans you have in the cupboard or the gallon milk jug from the fridge.

Aerobic Activity Can Be Fun

Aerobic activity is defined as prolonged continuous movement of large muscle groups. Translated, that means "do something that keeps you moving." Ideally, do it for 30 minutes straight. If you don't have that much time, three 10-minute aerobic activity sessions will benefit you almost as much.

The good thing about aerobic activity is that it includes many of the sports you probably already enjoy. Walking, biking, hiking, dancing, swimming and even basketball are all examples of aerobic exercise.

Another good thing is that you can easily accomplish those three 10-minute sessions with things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking around the neighborhood after work or parking your car farther away from your destination.

You could even turn shopping into an aerobic activity. Shopping involves walking, so don't stop for 10 minutes straight and you've worked in one of your daily sessions! Check with your local mall for mall walker programs and you'll have company.

Aerobic exercise is definitely good for cardiovascular health and fitness. And here's something else you'll like: Aerobic activity can help you lose weight.

Plenty of Good Exercise All Around the House

If you do housework or yard work, you're doing yourself a favor. The stretching and lifting that housework entails is good exercise. So is work you do outside. Yard work uses many muscle groups, especially activities like planting and working in the garden.

Raking uses your arm and back muscles.

Digging gives your arms and legs a workout. And gardening provides a bonus: You'll have more fresh vegetables and fruits to add to your diet.

Is one time better than another to exercise?

It's really up to you. You can exercise in the morning, afternoon or evening. Lunch breaks offer an excellent opportunity to get out of the office and exercise. Use your coffee break to take a short walk around the office. Get rid of the day's stress by fitting in an exercise session after work.

Whatever time you choose, make sure you stick with it, as establishing a routine will help you adhere to the program. For some people, it's easier to stay with an exercise program when you do it with a friend or coworker.

Make Time to Stay Healthy

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for yourself. If you're basically healthy, get going right now. If you're a man 45 or older, or a woman 55 or older, or have any health problems, consult your physician first.

Additional Resource

American Academy of Family Physicians—The Exercise Habit: www.familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/physical/basics/059.printerview.html

If you are interested in information on other health and fitness topics, contact: American Council on Exercise, 4851 Paramount Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, 800-825-3636; or, go online at www.acefitness.org and access the complete list of ACE Fit Facts™



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